

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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----- 129040

O 251342Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8296

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS TO ASMARA

1. FOR APPROX PAST TWO WEEKS, TRAVEL BY OFFICIAL EMBASSY PERSONNEL TO ASMARA HAS BEEN RESTRICTED BY EPMG. AS RESULT, WE HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN OUR EFFORTS TO SEND AN SY MTT AND COMTECH WHITE TO CONGEN. IN CASE OF MTT, CLEARANCE WAS NEVER GRANTED. RE WHITE, CLEARANCE WAS GRANTED AND THEN REVOKED. EPMG HAS GIVEN US NO REASON, ALTHOUGH MOFA HAS ASSURED US THAT RESTRICTION IS NOT UNILATERAL. (WE ARE SATISFIED THIS IS SO - BRITS HAVE BEEN SIMILARLY UNSUCCESSFUL.) AMB HAS NONTHELESS PROTESTED RESTRICTION ORALLY TO FONMIN KIFLE AND FOLLOWED UP WITH LETTER TO HIM FEB 23 REQUESTING HIS ACTIVE INTERVENTION IN LIFTING RESTRICTION ON TRAVEL OF OUR PERSONNEL, POINTING OUT THAT WHATEVER REASON FOR RESTRICTION MAY BE, WE ARE SPECIAL CASE IN VIEW OF KAGNEW AND CONGEN.

2. IN WAKE OF YET ANOTHER APPEAL MORNING FEB 25, CHIEF OF PROTOCOL PHONED BACK AND TOLD US RESTRICTION WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL "MIDDLE OF NEXT WEEK." WE FIND THIS INTOLERABLE AND ARE THEREFORE SENDING
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ANOTHER LETTER TODAY FROM AMBASSADOR TO KIFLE PROTESTING

EPMG ACTION. TEXT FOLLOWS:

"EXCELLENCY"

"FURTHER TO MY LETTER OF FEBRUARY 23, WE HAVE NOW BEEN OFFICIALLY ADVISED BY YOUR MINISTRY OF A GENERAL BAN ON TRAVEL TO ASMARA WHICH IS EXPECTED TO REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF NEXT WEEK. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED, FURTHER, THAT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THIS BAN NONE OF OUR CLEARANCE REQUESTS FOR TRAVEL TO ASMARA CAN BE HONORED UNTIL THE BAN IS LIFTED.

"AS YOU ARE AWARE, WE HAVE REPEATEDLY EXPLAINED THAT THE OPERATION OF THE CONSULATE GENERAL AND OF KAGNEW STATION URGENTLY REQUIRES THE PRESENCE IN ASMARA OF MR. ROBERT WOOD WHITE, JR., WHO IS A COMMUNICATIONS TECHNICIAN. ALTHOUGH MR. WHITE DID EARLIER RECEIVE YOUR GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL HE WAS PRECLUDED FROM DOING SO BY THE IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES. THE PRESENCE IN ASMARA OF THE AMERICAN CONSUL GENERAL, MR. GEORGE B. SHERRY, IS ALSO CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL. MR. SHERRY IS CURRENTLY HERE IN ADDIS ABABA ON CONSULTATIONS AND WAS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO HIS POST OF ASSIGNMENT TOMORROW, FEBRUARY 26. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION REFERRED TO ABOVE, THAT HE, TOO, WILL NOW BE PRECLUDED FROM RETURNING TO HIS ASSIGNED POST IN ASMARA, NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT ALSO PREVIOUSLY CLEARED HIS TRAVEL BACK TO ASMARA.

"YOUR GOVERNMENT ALSO HAS NOW HAD BEFORE IT A REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE TO TRAVEL TO ASMARA FOR MESSRS. ANTHONY J. WALTERS, CHARLES R. THOMAS, JR. AND RICHARD H. KLINGENMAIER (NOTE NO. 68) SINCE FEBRUARY 11. THESE MEN, WHO ARE SECURITY TECHNICIANS, HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ASMARA TO STRENGTHEN THE PHYSICAL SECURITY OF OFFICIAL AMERICAN PERSONNEL AND INSTALLATIONS THERE. YOUR GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL, TO DATE, TO PERMIT THESE EXPERTS TO PROCEED IMPLIES THE ASSUMPTION OF HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES SHOULD THERE BE ANY FURTHER INCIDENT INVOLVING AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVING IN ASMARA WHICH THEIR WORK MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PREVENTED.

"I WOULD POINT OUT TO YOUR EXCELLENCY THAT THE NET EFFECT OF THIS INDISCRIMINATE APPLICATION OF A TRAVEL BAN TO AMERICAN OFFICIALS TASKED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE WORK OF THE CONSULATE GENERAL AND OF KAGNEW STATION FLIES IN THE FACE OF BINDING AGREEMENTS BETWEEN OUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS UNDER WHICH THESE FACILITIES

ARE OPERATED IN ETHIOPIA. I MUST, THEREFORE, TAKE A
SERIOUS VIEW OF THE SITUATION THUS CREATED. WHETHER BY
DESIGN OR NOT, THE EFFECT OF YOUR GOVERNMENT'S ACTION
AMOUNTS TO HARASSMENT OF U.S. OFFICIALS AND IS CONTRARY
TO YOUR INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS.

"IN THE LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING I MUST REPEAT MOST
URGENTLY MY EARLIER REQUEST FOR YOUR PROMPT AND PERSONAL
INTERVENTION SO THAT MR. WHITE AND CONSUL GENERAL SHERRY
ARE AUTHORIZED TO PROCEED TOMORROW, FEBRUARY 26, VIA
MAAG AIRCRAFT TO ASMARA. I WOULD ALSO ASK THAT THE NECESSARY
STEPS BE TAKEN FOR OTHER AMERICAN PERSONNEL NEEDED IN
ASMARA, INCLUDING PARTICULARLY FOREIGN SERVICE INSPECTORS
TERREL E.S. ARNOLD, ROBERT A. STEIN AND W. SAMUEL BRUSHEL,
TO BE ENABLED TO TRAVEL TO ASMARA NEXT TUESDAY, MARCH 2.

"SINCERELY,
"ARTHUR W. HUMMEL"

3. CHIEF OF PROTOCOL'S STATEMENT CATCHES US AT PARTICU-
LARLY UNFORTUNATE TIME. CONGEN SHERRY (FOR WHOM WE HAD
CLEARANCE TO RETURN WHICH WE ASSUME IS NOW SUPERSEDED)
IS IN ADDIS TO CONFER WITH INSPECTION TEAM. CISCO PROJECT
MANAGER BAKER AND PA&E FACILITIES MANAGER DENDULIS
ACCOMPANIED SHERRY TO ADDIS. INSPECTION TEAM HAD PLANNED
TO VISIT ASMARA BEGINNING TUESDAY, MARCH 2. WHITE IS
STILL HERE HOPING TO OBTAIN CLEARANCE. GIVEN TODAY'S
STATEMENT, NONE OF THESE WILL BE ABLE TO PROCEED TO
ASMARA UNTIL EPMG LIFTS RESTRICTION.

4. ACTION REQUESTED. WE WILL CONTINUE PROTEST VIGOR-
OUSLY HERE UNTIL WE GET SATISFACTORY RESULTS. MEANWHILE,
HOWEVER, WE REQUEST DEPT CALL IN ETHIOPIAN CHARGE SOONEST,
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AND DRAWING UPON AMBASSADOR'S LETTER QUOTED PARA 2 ABOVE,
STRONGLY REGISTER DEPARTMENT'S DISMAY.
HUMMEL

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